

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS PERP VE US

SUBJECT: PRES PEREZ PROTESTS REPORT OF US BRIEFING
PAPERS RE VENEZUELAN ELECTION

1. FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED ME THIS EVENING (JUNE 9) AT 8:00 PM TO SAY PRESIDENT PEREZ WAS EXTREMELY UPSET OVER UPI DESPATCH REPORTEDLY CITING BRIEFING PAPERS PREPARED FOR PRES CARTER'S VISIT WHICH STATE POSSIBILITY OF AD VICTORY IN DECEMBER ELECTION WAS IN DOUBT BECAUSE OF MISMANAGEMENT OF PETROLEUM WEALTH AND CORRUPTION. HE SAID PRESIDENT WANTED AN EXPLANATION. I TOLD MINISTER THAT I HAD NOT SEEN THE REPORT, BUT THAT THE US GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE A POSITION ON THE ELECTION NOR DID THE US GOVERNMENT TAKE THE POSITION THAT PEREZ' GOVERNMENT WAS CORRUPT OR HAD MISMANAGED MONEY. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID POINTEDLY THAT WE MAY WISH TO ISSUE A CLARIFICATION SINCE THIS WILL BE IN THE PAPERS TOMORROW.

2. UPI STORY WHICH WE NOW HAVE IS BY JUAN WALTE, THE THIRD
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IN THREE DAYS , STATES:
USG CONSIDERS THAT, ALTHOUGH AD PARTY HAS A BETTER POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, THAT PARTY IS VULNERABLE IN THE 1978 ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF GOV MISMANAGEMENT OF PETROLEUM INCOME, INFLATION AND CORRUPTION."

STORY STATES IT IS BASED ON BRIEFING PAPERS PREPARED FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO VENEZUELA AND QUOTES DIRECTLY FROM THEM TO THE EFFECT THAT VICTORY OF EITHER MAJOR VENEZUELAN PARTY WILL NOT AFFECT BILATERAL RELATIONS. STORY DESCRIBES BOTH MAJOR CANDIDATES DRAWING ON BRIEFING PAPERS PAINTING MORE ATTRACTIVE PICTURE OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATE STATING IT IS TO EXPECTED LATTER SHOULD BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE VOTERS TO FOCUS ON THE DEFEATS OF THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION. STORY ALSO STATES THAT CLOSE RELATIONS AND DIALOGUE WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE WITH PEREZ IS ONE OF THE PRESIDENT'S MOST IMPORATNT ACHIEVEMENTS IN REGARD TO LATIN AMERICA. THERE IS MORE TO THE STORY BUT THE EMBASSY DOES NOT CONSIDER THE REST OF IT OFFENSIVE.

3.COMMENT: THIS LOOKS LIKE A REPEAT OF THE PEREZ/NYTIMES /CIA CRISIS OF FEBRUARY 1977. AGAINST THIS CASE, PEREZ IS APPARENTLY GOING OFF LIKE A ROCKET AGAIN AND WE COULD BE ON THE VERGE OF A REAL PROBLEM IN OUR RELATIONS. IT IS NOT UNLIKELY THAT THIS MIGHT AFFECT THIS VISIT TO PANAMA UNLESS A SUITABLE PUBLIC DECLARATION TAKES THE STING OUT. SINCE THE ALLEGED CONCLUSIONS ARE NOT ACCURATE IN OUR JUDGEMENT IN ANY CASE, AND REPRESENT A GRATUITOUS SLAP AT PEREZ, IT IS IN MY JUDGMENT ESSENTIAL TO ISSUE A STRONG COUNTERING STATEMENT AS WE CAN,

4. WE INTEND TO ISSUE TOMORROW (JUNE 10)
THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
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"THE EMBASSY HAS SEEN THE NEWS REPORT AND WISHES TO STATE THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TAKES ABSOLUTELY NO POSITION REGARDING THE FORTHCOMING VENEZUELAN ELECTIONS. IT HAS IN NO WAY REACHED ANY CONCLUSION CONCERNING ALLEGED MISMANAGEMENT OR CURRUPTION . THE EMBASSY STRESSES THAT THE VIEWS IN THIS REPORT DO NOT IN ANY WAY REFLECT THE POSITION OR THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STAES GOVERNMENT REGARDING VENEZUELA".
VAKY

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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